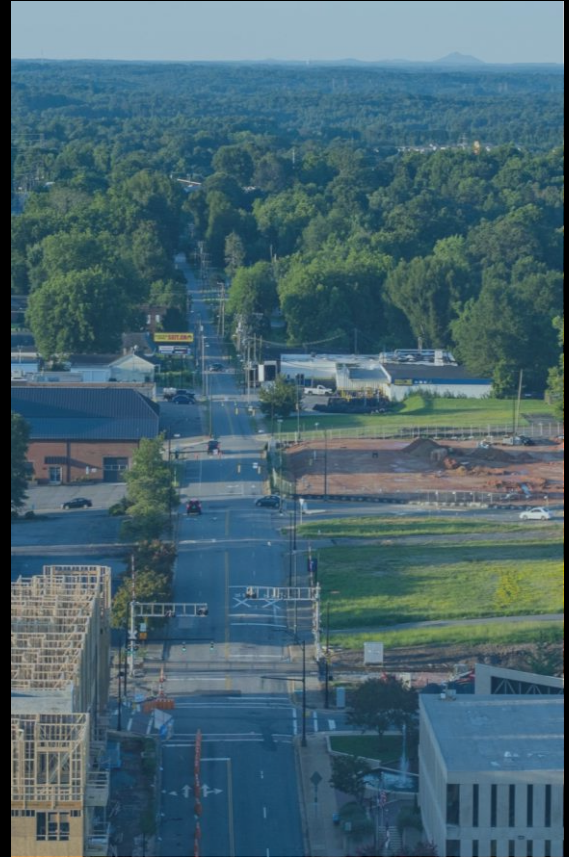


Strategies to Address Racial Disparities in Upward Economic Mobility

Warren Wood, City Manager



Overview

- I. Timeline
- II. Brief Summary of Disparity Report
- III. Improving access to Economic Opportunity
- IV. Roles of Various Organizations
- V. Ten Initial Strategies
- VI. Next Steps

Timeline Overview



What the Report Revealed

- The report confirmed that there are disparities based on race in our Community.
- Minorities constitute a growing percentage of Hickory's workforce.
- That trend will continue due to the aging of our region.
- It is imperative that our workforce has the skill sets necessary to participate and succeed in the economy of tomorrow.
- Avoiding a skills gap crisis will involve engaging school age students early and educating them on the training and expertise they will need to be successful.

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

	Population	In Labor Force	%	Number Unemployed	%
African American	4,756	2,720	57.2%	337	12.4%
Asian American	2,255	1,616	71.7%	176	10.9%
Hispanic	5,248	3,967	75.6%	204	3.9%
Total	12,259	8,303	67.7%	717	8.6%
White	27,311	16,659	61.0%	1,399	8.4%

AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD INCOME

	Households	People Per	<\$50,000	Average Income
African American	2,094	2.27	58.60%	\$25,459
Asian American	452	4.99	46.90%	\$66,458
Hispanic	1,525	3.44	74.80%	\$29,419
Total	4,071	3.01	68.50%	\$40,445
White	12,208	2.23	47.20%	\$53,605

Poverty Statistics

	Population	# in Poverty	% In Poverty
African American	4,756	1,341	28.2%
Asian American	2255	518	23.0%
Hispanic	5,248	1,301	24.8%
Total	12,259	3,160	25.8%
White	27,311	3,168	11.6%

SNAP Enrollment Numbers



	Population	# SNAP	%SNAP
African American	4,756	1,645	34.6%
Asian American	2255	629	27.9%
Hispanic	5,248	1,532	29.2%
Total	12,259	3,806	31%
White	27,311	3,004	11%

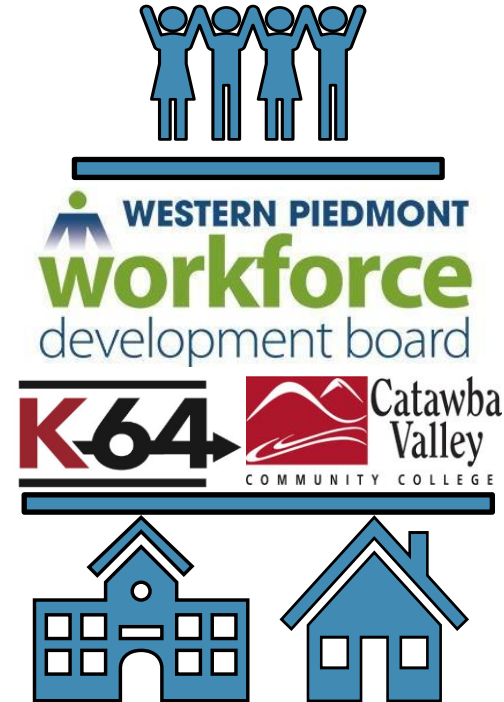
An aerial photograph of a city, likely Nashville, Tennessee, showing a mix of urban buildings and green spaces. In the background, a range of mountains is visible under a clear sky. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

**A good paying job is the
surest way to avoid poverty.**

*How can individuals prepare for and
connect to employment
opportunities?*

Improving Access to Economic Opportunity

- For most, building a foundation that enables them to be successful starts:
 - At home
 - Hickory Public School/Catawba County Schools systems
- And for many looking to remain in Hickory, it progresses through:
 - K-64
 - CVCC
 - Western Piedmont Workforce Development Board





- K-64 is an economic development initiative that works with learners of all ages (Kindergarten to retirement) to ensure they have the job-ready skills needed to meet current and future workforce demands in Catawba County.
- Connects every public school student in the County with state-of-the-art technology.
- Teaches “soft skills” to every public school student.
- Connects students with local employers for job shadowing, internships, work study programs, and apprenticeships.
- In short, K-64 actively engages students of all ages in preparing them for viable and sustainable careers right here in Catawba County.

CVCC STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

5,000

Enrolled
Students



22

Average
Student Age



77%

Students 24
or Younger

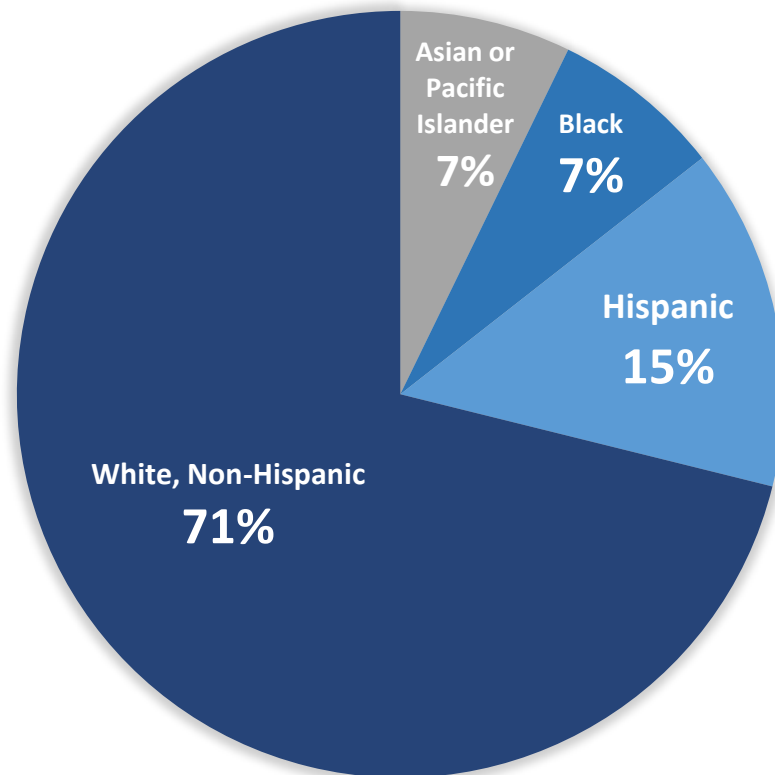


44%

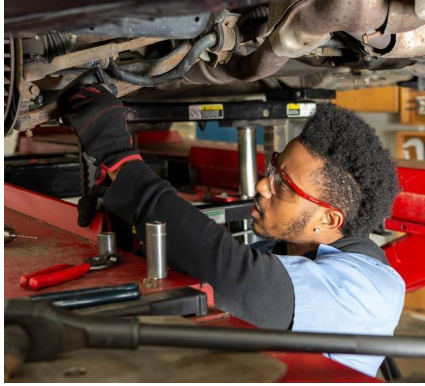
Male

56%

Female



CVCC CAREER OPTIONS



Automotive Systems Technology



Welding Technology



Mechanical Engineering Technology



Dental Hygiene



Surgical Technology



Cosmetology

WESTERN PIEDMONT WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

15,000

Jobseekers



103,000

Career Services Provided



187

Recruitment Events



3,200

Individual businesses were helped with workforce issues



\$307,000

Worth of Job-Training Scholarships awarded



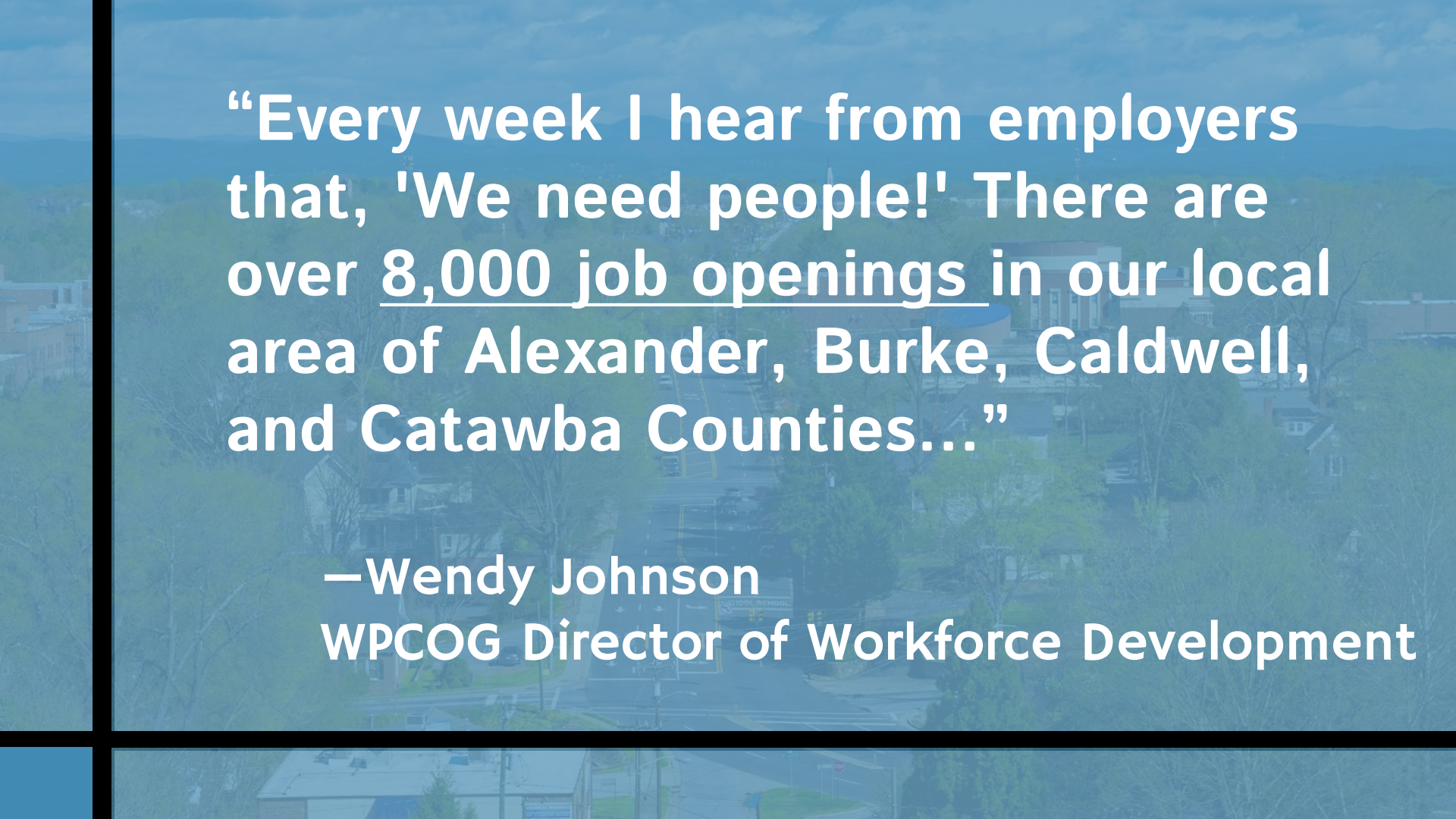
\$328,000

Paid in internships and on-the-job-training



THE OPPORTUNITY



An aerial photograph of a suburban neighborhood, showing a mix of residential houses, green trees, and a school building. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The text is white and centered in the upper half of the image.

“Every week I hear from employers that, 'We need people!' There are over 8,000 job openings in our local area of Alexander, Burke, Caldwell, and Catawba Counties...”

—Wendy Johnson
WPCOG Director of Workforce Development



TEN INITIAL STRATEGIES



Number 1: Job Creation

- The best way to improve one's economic outlook is to secure a good paying job.
- Catawba County EDC has attracted over 4,500 new jobs over the past 10 years.
- These jobs pay a wage above the Catawba County average wage.
- The City will continue to place a major focus creating good paying employment opportunities for its residents.

NC Works

Job Seekers • Employers • Resources and Services • Select Language • Sign In

Search Jobs ▾ Job Title, Company, Occupation or Military Code City, State, County, Region or Zip Search

Enter a keyword and/or location to find jobs.

95 Career Centers in NC Find a Center

14,765 Resumes updated this week Find a Candidate

525 New jobs posted today Find a Job

5.0 Unemployment Rate Find LMI Data

indeed

What Job title, keywords, or company Where Hickory, NC Find jobs

Post your resume - It only takes a few seconds

Employers: get started - post a job, search resumes, and more

Recent searches Edit

Hickory, NC
7359 new in Hickory, NC

Number 2: Connecting People to Local Job Opportunities

- One area where there is a barrier is in connecting people to information about employment opportunities.
- The information can be difficult to locate if you don't know where to look.
- Navigating the information can also be challenging.
- We will establish a job database for local jobs and post and distribute this information to individuals or groups who would like to receive it



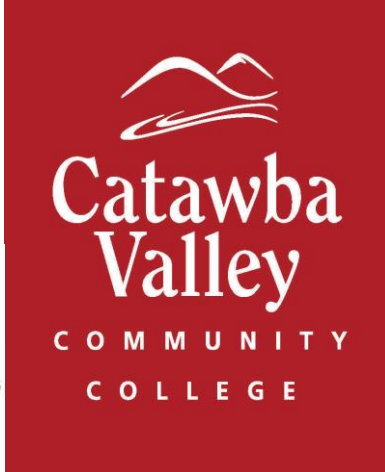
Number 3:
**Support efforts to
 create a Training
 Facility that
 Specializes in Future
 and Emerging
 Career Paths.**

- Various organizations in the community seek the development of a high-profile, regional vocational training facility to provide training and skill development opportunities.
- Some industries of focus would include: Ag-tech, Biotech, BioPharma, Energy Systems, Communications Systems and Existing and Traditional Industry Sectors.
- This would be a multi-million dollar endeavor requiring significant State and Federal funding.



Number 4:
Support the Catawba County Chamber of Commerce in their efforts to educate companies on the value of having a diverse workforce.

- Diverse companies have a 2.3x higher cash flow per employee over a three-year period than non-diverse companies.
- 80% of employees say they value inclusive policies in the workplace. 72% of employees also indicated that they would leave their job to work for a company that is more inclusive.
- Ethnically diverse companies are 35% more likely to increase revenue, and gender diverse companies are 15% more likely to increase revenue.
- Racially diverse teams outperform non-diverse teams by 35%.



Number 5:

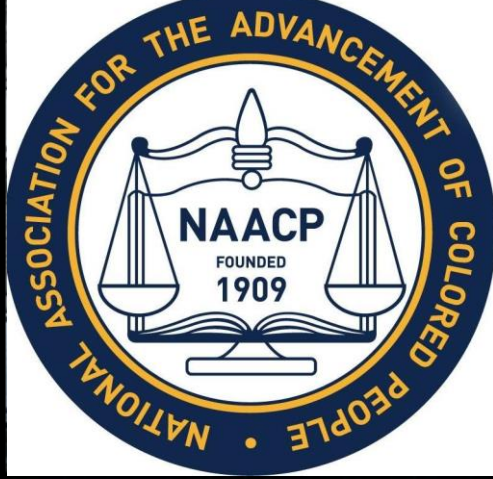
Form a Workforce Development Working Group

- The main entities involved in workforce development are K-64, NC Works Career Center, CVCC and the Catawba County Economic Development Commission.
- This working group will be composed of senior mgmt. from these organizations.
- Develop solutions to employment barriers such as transportation, child care, criminal record, no high school diploma, etc...



Number 6:
**Promote Small
Business Development
Assistance**

- Hickory is known for its entrepreneurial tradition.
- Minorities in Hickory are generally underrepresented in business ownership.
- The CVCC Small Business Center provides free business start-up assistance.
- Additionally, they provide assistance in accessing Small Business Administration's Loan Program.
- We will partner with CVCC in promoting CVCC's Small Business Center and the services it provides to our residents.
- We will also provide space in our facilities for the Small Business Center to conduct seminars on how to start and grow a business.



Equity & Inclusion Task force

- (1) Tutoring
- (2) Mentoring
- (3) Pre-K/Early Childhood Learning
- (4) Establishing a Family Resource Center
- (5) Grant Writing and Fundraising.

Number 7:
**Support the
community's efforts
to address the needs
of the underserved**

- The NAACP Equity & Inclusion Task Force has been working to identify initiatives to build a more equitable & inclusive Hickory.
- These initiatives will serve at-risk and underserved students and families. The City and local churches have offered support for volunteers to use their facilities.
- This provides a great opportunity for the Hickory to collaborate on these initiatives and positively impact our community.



Number 8:
Coordinate a Pre-summer event in the community to inform parents and school aged children of educational and recreational activities available to them this summer.

- A group of ministers and members of the NAACP suggested holding this event as a way to help kids stay busy during the summer months.
- The City will continue to coordinate this event which will include organizations from the SALT Block, the Partnership for Children, YMCA, Parks and Rec. staff and others.





Number 9:
**Promote Workforce
Diversity within the
City of Hickory**

- Continue to pursue a diverse applicant pool so City staff reflects the community it serves.
- Work with the internal employment diversity committee to find ways to better reach underrepresented groups within the City's workforce.

CAROLINA DEMOGRAPHY



Western Piedmont
Council of Governments

Creative Regional Solutions Since 1968



North Carolina Department of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Number 10:

Continue to measure data consistently and transparently and report on progress.

- WPCOG Disparity Report
- New Demographic Information
 - New report with 2020 census data
 - Report in 2025 with American Community Survey (ACS) data
 - Report with 2030 Census data.
- We will measure progress and make adjustments to strategies as needed

WHERE CAN THE CITY BE MOST EFFECTIVE?

1

Job Creation

2

Connecting People to Local Job Opportunities

3

Support efforts to create a regional vocational training facility.

4

Support the Catawba County Chamber's employment diversity efforts.

5

Form a Workforce Development Working Group

6

Promote Small Business Development Assistance

7

Support the community's efforts to address the needs of the underserved

8

Continue offering pre-summer event for the community.

9

Promote Workforce Diversity within the City of Hickory

10

Continue to measure data consistently and transparently and report on progress.

Next Steps



The background of the slide is a vibrant, abstract composition. At the top, there are horizontal bands of soft, blended colors in shades of orange, yellow, and light green. Below this, a large, semi-circular mosaic dominates the center. The mosaic is composed of numerous small, irregular tiles in various colors including light blue, teal, orange, and purple. Embedded within the mosaic is the phrase 'WE BUILD COMMUNITIES' in a bold, sans-serif font. The word 'WE' is partially visible on the left, 'BUILD' is in the middle, and 'COMMUNITIES' is on the right. Above the word 'BUILD', there is a circular emblem containing a sun-like symbol with rays. The entire mosaic is set against a backdrop of swirling, painterly strokes in warm tones. In the bottom right corner, there is a small, solid blue square. At the very bottom center, the top edge of a white, circular object, possibly a bowl or a plate, is visible.

Questions and Comments